Miscellaneous Articles Against the Trinity

By
The Southern Israelite
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17 Things Christians Do Not Understand About Their Own Trinity Doctrine

When I have put the argument to Protestant Christians that the Trinity contradicts private judgment they admit that this simply means it cannot be fully understood. This is deliberate obfuscation and I maintain the lion share, the substance of this doctrine, cannot be understood and is not understood by the Christians and they must admit this doctrine cannot be understood. Given this point the Reformation and all apologetics must be surrendered.

James Anderson admits this when he says,

> *"If it turns out that adherents of the latter two religions [Judaism and Islam] can mirror the Christian's appeal to mystery in defense of their own paradoxical teachings, then this is the price to be exacted for reconciling orthodox Christian doctrines with the rationality of Christian faith. In my estimation, it is a price worth paying."*[1]

What Christians do not understand about the Trinity:

1. The essence and existence of God.
2. What the word *God* means.[2]
3. Where God is.
4. What a person is. Mode, Activity, Attribute, Mask?
5. What the distinction between nature and person is.
6. Which version of the Trinity is the right one. (Eastern Orthodox or Latin)
7. What it means for the Son to be begotten of the Father. (*Monogenes*)
8. Whether the Trinity is 1 deity, 3 deities or four deities.
9. What the word "one" means. Unity/pantheism, ADS, Cardinal singularity?

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[1] James Anderson, *Paradox in Christian Theology* (Eugene, OR: Paternoster Theological Monographs, Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2007), 285

[2] The Nine Definitions of God in Christian Theology:

1. The Father/Monarchy; Concreted person.
2. The Divine Nature; abstract substance; or that an uncreated person possesses a divine nature.
3. The Divine nature numeric essence.
4. Godhead.
5. Source of operation.
6. Auto-theos: that is uncaused.
7. An indirect sense in that the Logos and the Holy Spirit are called God as they inter-dwell (perichoresis) and are consubstantial with the Father.
8. Elohim – One who is in a place of authority. (Exo. 7: 1 And the Lord said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.; 2 Corinthians 4:4In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.)
9. Uncreated

Which one do they mean?

10. Whether the divine essence is generic or numeric.
11. What the hypostatic union is. One person with two natures? One person with two minds/souls?: The hypostatic union is described as: "unspeakable" (Turretin Vol 2.13.7), "ineffable" (Constantinople 553, The Capitula of the Council VII, Cyril's Second Letter to Succensus, para 3. See 20, McGuckin pg. 204-205 where Cyril also calls the union "inexpressibly united") "a paradox" (McGukin, St. Cyril 154, 177, 185, 187, 191, 195, 201, 216, 221, Owen, Works I, p. 46 or "transcends understanding." (Cyril 1st Letter to Succensus para 6, McGuckin 239) The hypostatic construction is referred to as paradoxical (John A. McGuckin, St. Cyril of Alexandria, 154, 177, 185, 187, 191, 195, 201, 221, Paul Gavrilyuk in *The Suffering of the Impassible God* admits that predicating suffering of the Logos is a paradox (62-64, 134).)
12. How the Son could be forsaken of the Father seeing they are the same numeric being.
13. How as the Council of Chalcedon says under the clause that the natures are without mixture yet not espouse Nestorius' view?
14. Is it one person in two natures or two natures in one person? (Constantinople 553, The Capitula of the Council VII – Chalcedon (Defintion of Faith))
15. How the Logos could be God, immutable and eternal and yet ontologically change to become man. John 1:14. Shedd says, "A theanthropic person is a Trinitarian person ***modified*** by union with a human nature" (*Dogmatic Theology*, Vol 2, 268)
16. Trinitarians say they believe the humanity of Christ was Generic but then how can he be perfect God and perfect man, when he is perfect God *generic* man? So how do we distinguish the human nature of Messiah from a full human person? We can't!
17. The distinction between filiation and spiration.

Was Jesus Omniscient?

Mar 13:[32] But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

When faced with the above scripture, Trinitarians will immediately deflect and point to John 21:17:

He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son *of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord,* ***thou knowest all things****, thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

Our opponents are satisfied that the Bible contradicts itself. Brilliant!

Is the Bible contradicting itself? No.

I have two responses:

1. The sense Peter means was already denoted in John 16.

*[29] His disciples *said, "Lo, now You are speaking plainly and are not using a figure of speech. [30] Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this we believe that You came from God."*

Notice the apostles don't say that his knowing of all things proves he is the creator. It proves he came from the creator; that he was taught his doctrine from the creator. John 15:15.

The same sense is given to us in 1 John 2 of those believers taught of the Holy Spirit:

[20] But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

Are the Trinitarians now going to tell us that the elect are the creator as well?

John 7:[14] But when it was now the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and began to *teach. [15] The Jews then were astonished, saying, "How has this man become learned, having never been educated?"[16] So Jesus answered them and said, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me. [17] If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or* whether *I speak from Myself. [18] He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.*

2. The problem is John 21:17 is simply a record of a conversation the apostles had with Jesus. It is not didactic scripture. The apostles said numerous things that were incorrect all over

the Gospels and showed many times, foolishness, unbelief and outright rejection of Jesus' teaching.

Mark 8:29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. 30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him. 31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. 33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

And yet even after telling his apostles exactly what was going to happen the apostles are bewildered at what happened to Jesus. In Luke 24, the apostles admit that they totally rejected Jesus' words because they did not align with Premillennialism.

Luke 24: 12 Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass. 13 And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. 14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened. 15 And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. 16 But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. 17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? 18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? 19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: 20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. 21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done. 22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; 23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. 24 And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. 25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: 26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? 27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

And so the apostles ignorant and erroneous in their beliefs at this time needed to be instructed due to their foolishness, unbelief and ignorance. Jesus told them exactly what was going to happen and yet they refused to believe what was coming out of his mouth.

Jesus told them in Matt. 28:19-20 to go into all the world and disciple the gentiles but they didn't believe him or understand how gentiles could covenant with Yahvoah. In Acts 1, when the issue of Gentile salvation began to be discussed even past Paul's conversion, it took Peter's vision in Acts 10 and 11 to convince the Jewish followers of Messiah that Gentiles were coming into the Covenant with Yahovah through Jesus.

The apostles ask:

Acts 1:6 Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

Yet Jesus said plainly in Matt 21 that the kingdom was taken from the Jews due to their unbelief:

43 Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. 45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

Thus, the words of the apostles in John 16:30 and 21:17 are not to be taken as didactic portions of scripture but historical records of their words during this period where they were being corrected from their errors and tutored in the doctrine of Messiah.

Objections:

When faced with Mark 13:32 that Jesus does not know the last day but only the Father, Christians will perform two great feats of dishonest mental gymnastics. They will say that this passage is only speaking to the human nature of Messiah. But this excuse contradicts the passage that says the Father **only** knows. If the Son in his divine nature knows then it isn't the Father only.

The second piece of dishonest lying rubbish Christians will throw out is that the word *know* in Mark 13:32 means *reveal* not to *know*. They will point to Matt. 21:27 where the Greek word to *know*, εἴδω eidō, is used and translated *tell*.

And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell(εἴδω eidō). And he said unto them, Neither tell(λέγω legō,) I you by what authority I do these things.

But in the context the word *tell* means to perceive. The Greek word for *tell* in the later part of the verse is the Greek word λέγω legō, not εἴδω eidō.

Thus, their deliberate dishonesty is exposed.

The Trinity and John 1:1

A friend of mine asks:

"How do you deal with John 1:1 "and the word was god " This is the one verse giving me trouble ."

The question assumes what you are being told this verse means is what the Trinitarians say it means. They say *hey look, the verse clearly says Jesus is God!* So Jesus is the same person as God?

Well *no*, the Trinitarians will say!

But you just said the verse says he is God.

Well yes but we mean he is the same nature as the Father but not the same person.

But the passage doesn't say that and the distinction the Trinitarian is making is complete nonsense.

The numeric nature/person distinction is meaningless sophistry. As Schaff admits in *Nicene And Post Nicene Christianity: History Of The Christian Church* Vol. III, Chapter 9, Section 130,

> "The word person is in reality only a make-shift, in the absence of a more adequate term. Our idea of God is more true and deep than our terminology, and the essence and character of God far transcends our highest ideas."

But Paul tells us what this passage means. It means the word is the image and representation of God.

Col. 1:15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Heb. 1:1 God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and ***the exact representation of His nature****, and upholds all things by the word of His power.*

Ego Eimi not Restricted to Deity

Trinitarians often use the argument that the Greek phrase *Ego Eimi* used so famously in John 8:58 echoing back to those famous words first spoken by the creator in Exo. 3:14, proves that Jesus(Yeshua) is deity. This of course is 1. Baseless. Nowhere are we instructed in the Bible that when someone uses the phrase "I am" that this is referring to their deity. 2. It ignores the fact that in the New Testament alone, though there are many places in the LXX where it is used of non-deities, there are a few times when the phrase is applied to mortal human beings. It is used of the disciples in Matt. 26:22.

Matthew 26:22 And they were exceeding sorrowful,
*and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, **is it I**?*

καὶ λυπούμενοι σφόδρα ἤρξαντο λέγειν
αὐτῷ ἕκαστος αὐτῶν,Μήτι **ἐγώ εἰμι** κύριε[3]

It is used of Peter in Acts 10:21.

*Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, **I am** he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?*

καταβὰς δὲ Πέτρος πρὸς τοὺς ἄνδρας τοὺς ἀπεσταλμενοῦς ἀπὸ τοῦΚορνηλίου πρὸς αὐτὸν,
εἶπεν Ἰδού, **ἐγώ εἰμι** ὃν ζητεῖτε τίς ἡ αἰτία δι᾽ ἣνπάρεστε[4]

One could make the argument as well that it is used in 1 Tim. 1:15 of Paul but the sequence is not exact.

[3] https://www.blueletterbible.org/tr/mat/26/22/p0/t_conc_955022
[4] https://www.blueletterbible.org/kjv/act/10/1/t_conc_1028021

Is Jesus(Yeshua) Equal With God(Elohim)?

Many Trinitarians will quote Phil. 2:5-11 in proof of the Trinity Doctrine.

Phil. 2:[5] Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, [6] who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, *[7] but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant,* and *being made in the likeness of men. [8] Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. [9] For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

We do not need to despair to understand this passage outside of the Trinitarian scheme. The sense is given to us in scripture very clearly.

John 5:[16] For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.[17] But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." [18] For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, ***making Himself equal with God****. [19] Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner. [20] For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. [21] For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. [22] For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, [23] so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.*

Here we see that equality with Elohim simply means that Yeshua was GIVEN authority on earth to execute the prerogative of the Father as the Son was the representative of Yah on earth.

Heb. 1:3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.

John 5:43 I have come in My Father's name

Col. 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

The Jews complained of this many times.

Matt 9:1 Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city. 2 And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven." 3 And some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes." 4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? 5 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk'? 6 But so that you may know that ***the Son of Man has authority on earth to***

forgive sins"–*then He *said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home." 7 And he got up and went home. 8 But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.*

Here we see again that the equality between Yeshua and Elohim is not an equality of nature as if Yeshua was the same being or person as Elohim but of authority. The same principle is applied to magistrates. Psalm 82:1 states,

God takes His stand in His own congregation;
He judges in the midst of the rulers (elohim).

1 Tim. 3:16 and Dean Burgon Refuted as a Basis for the Trinity

Triunists/Trinitarians often point to 1 Tim 3:16 as the clincher in a Theology Proper debate. Their argument is founded on a weak foundation.

First, the θεός reading is unique content from deprecated manuscripts in the Majority text family.[5] Even the Romanist version does not contain this reading. [6] Erasmus even rejected it as spurious.[7] And I find it equally disgusting that Trinitarian apologists will hinge their entire argument for 1 Tim. 3:16 on the Academic authority of Dean Burgon who is completely eclipsed in authority by Erasmus whose contributions with the Greek New Testament are unmatched in Church History. Moreover, Erasmus is a hero among the KJV-only advocates themselves!

Daniel B. Wallace on the θεός reading in 1 Tim 3:16:

> "The textual variant θεός in the place of ὅς has been adamantly defended by some scholars, particularly those of the 'majority text' school. Not only is such a reading poorly attested [Footnote: …Not one firsthand of any Greek witnesses prior to the the 8th century read θεός…-DS] but the syntactical argument that 'mystery' being a neuter noun, cannot be followed by the masculine pronoun (ὅς) is entirely without weight. As attractive theologically as the reading θεός may be, it is spurious. To reject it is not to deny the deity of Christ, of course; it is just to deny any explicit reference in this text."[8]

Vincent's Word Studies commentary on 1 Tim. 3:16:

> "God (Θεος)
>
> But the correct reading is ος who. The antecedent of this relative is not mystery, as if Christ were styled "the mystery," but the relative refers to Christ as an antecedent; and the abruptness of its introduction may be explained by the fact that it and the words which follow were probably taken from an ancient credal hymn. In the earlier Christian ages it was not unusual to employ verse or rhythm for theological teaching or statement. The heretics propounded their peculiar doctrines in psalms. Clement of Alexandria wrote a hymn in honor of Christ for the use of catechumens, and Arius embodied his heresy in his Thalia which was sung in the streets and taverns of Alexandria. The Muratorian Canon was probably composed in verse. In the last quarter of the fourth century, there are two metrical lists of Scripture by Amphilochius and Gregory Nazianzen."[9]

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[5] http://openscriptures.org/prototypes/manuscript-comparator/?passage=1+tim+3%3A16&view=parallel&strongs=1
[6] http://www.newadvent.org/bible/1ti003.htm
[7] James D. Tracy, *Erasmus, the Growth of a Mind*, 161
[8] Daniel Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament, 341-342
[9] http://www.studylight.org/com/vnt/view.cgi?bk=53&ch=3

Even if the *Theos* reading were correct, there is no numeric qualification to it and thus we could fairly place this in the *Elohim* category. Samuel Clarke pointed out that if the *Theos* reading was correct this passage is simply saying the same thing as John 1:1-3.

Burgon argues,

> "S. Paul certainly wrote μέγα ἐστὶ τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον; Θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, ("Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh") But it requires to be explained at the outset, that the holy Name when abbreviated (which it always was), thus,—ΘΣ ("God")"[10]

You see reader, Burgon knows that the wording in the text is not Θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί. The Θεὸς reading is an inference from an assumed contracted form: ΘΣ.[11]

Burgon states,

> "An archetypal copy in which one or both of these slight strokes had vanished from the word ΘΣ ("God"), gave rise to the reading ΟΣ ("who"),—of which nonsensical substitute, traces survive in only two349 manuscripts,—א and 17: not, for certain, in one single ancient Father,—no, nor for certain in one single ancient Version."
>
> This is the exact opposite thing stated by Sir Issac Newton, in Opera quae exstant omnia, Volume 5,
>
> "What the Latins have done to this text, the Greeks have done to that of St. Paul (Timothy 3.16). For by changing o' into ΘC, the abbreviation of Θεός, they now read 'Great is the mystery of godliness: GOD manifested in the flesh.' Whereas all the churches for the first four or five hundred years, and the authors of all the ancient versions, Jerome, as well as the rest, read, 'Great is the mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh.' "

Jerome's late 4th Century Latin Vulgate states,

> "et manifeste magnum est pietatis sacramentum quod manifestatum est in carne iustificatum est in spiritu apparuit angelis praedicatum est gentibus creditum est in mundo adsumptum est in gloria
>
> And evidently great is the mystery of godliness, **which was manifested in the flesh**, was justified in the spirit, appeared unto angels, hath been preached unto the Gentiles, is believed in the world, is taken up in glory."

[10] John William Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, 99

[11] http://prototypes.openscriptures.org/manuscript-comparator/?passage=1+tim+3%3A16&view=parallel&strongs=1

Bruce M. Metzger states in *The Text of the New Testament*, page 187,

> "In i Tim. iii. 16 the earlier manuscripts read OC ('he who') while many of the later manuscripts read ΘC (the usual contraction for Θεός, 'God'). The letters gamma, pi, and tau (F, II, T) were liable to be confused, particularly if the cross-bar on the first and last letters were carelessly drawn, or if the right leg of the pi were too short."

Samuel Clarke, *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity,* page 88,

> "It has been great controversy among learned men, whether [Θεός] or [ὅς] or [o'] be the true reading in this place."

Conspiracy sauce for the goose can be for the gander. Buzzard states,

> "Another example of a text which was altered is 1 Timothy 3:16. This verse reads in the KJV: "God was manifested in the flesh." Modern versions have corrected the word "God" to "He who." The alteration of an original "He who" (in Greek Oj) was very sneakily accomplished when some scribes changed the O (omicron) into a q (theta) giving qj (theta sigma). The reading THS was an abbreviated form of the Greek word theos, God. All that had to be done was to draw a little line across the middle of the O to produce the Greek letter theta (q). Then the text was made to sound Trinitarian and to support the Incarnation: "God was manifested in the flesh." "He who" (O j) was made to read "God" (qj)."[12]

Now the issue of how this reading relates to the quotations of the early Church Fathers is controversial as well. Some claim that the writings of the Church Fathers have been edited.

In these quotations the *Theos* reading does not appear:

Hilary of Poitiers, *On the Trinity*, Book XI,

> "9…Let us postpone for a moment the exposition of this passage in the Gospel, and ask them first whether they have forgotten the preaching of the Apostle, who said, Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory. 1 Timothy 3:16"[13]

John Cassian, *On the Incarnation*, Book VII, C 17,

[12] Anthony Buzzard, *Jesus Was Not a Trinitarian: A call to return to the creed of Jesus, 257*
[13] http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/330211.htm

> "For Scripture says that that which was born of Mary is of the Holy Ghost. Matthew 1:20 Who also filled with righteousness (justitia) that which was created: for it says 'He appeared in the flesh, was justified in the Spirit.' 1 Timothy 3:16"[14]

Tertullian does not use this passage at all in his *Against Praxeas* which if it existed should have been discussed in great detail.[15]

In these quotations the *Theos* reading does appear:

Gregory of Nyssa *Against Eunomius,* Book II, 1,

> "but that we might be convinced that God has truly been manifested in the flesh, and believe that to be the only true mystery of godliness 1 Timothy 3:16"[16]

John Chrysostom, *Homily 15 on the Gospel of John,*

> "And wonder not that Paul says in another place, God was manifested in the Flesh 1 Timothy 3:16; because the manifestation took place by means of the flesh, not according to (His) Essence."[17]

Regardless of the controversies, I think I have proved that the variant reading is definitely not a product of the "the unwearied industry of 150 years" before Burgon wrote in the 1880s. I don't care to chase this rabbit any further.

[14] http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/35097.htm
[15] http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0317.htm
[16] http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/290102.htm
[17] http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/240115.htm